

THE Inyo County News-Letter

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INDEPENDENCE CAL. 93526

January 8, 1979

Martial arts come to Inyo County

News Briefs

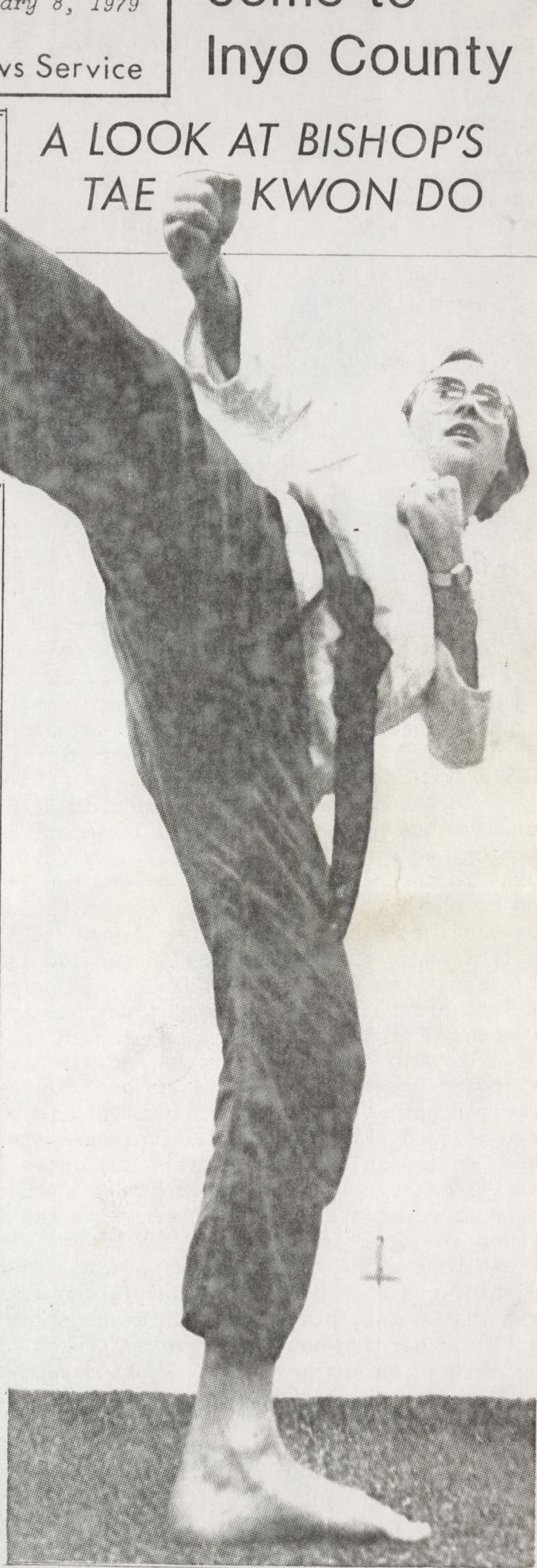
BISHOP'S GAS PRICE WAR MOVES INTO THE COURTS; A "CAR THEFT" TURNS INTO A "LARK"; MORE PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTY'S "MORALE" AND "PERSONNEL" ISSUES

AT BISHOP, the motorists were delighted: the town's first gasoline line war in years had dropped pump prices by a dime or more. Not so happy, however, were the warriors: for them the battle was a costly one and would soon be even costlier; the fight went into court. The legal battle got underway when a Texaco station owner, Ken Lloyd, filed suit against another station owner, Rocco Massari, owner of nearby Vista Service Station, who had been selling his gasoline for as little as 63.9 cents. Lloyd said in his suit that Massari was violating the California Unfair Practices Act in selling gasoline for less than cost.

Massari fought back, calling in his own attorney, Leland Bray, and early this week he filed a countersuit which names not only Ken Lloyd, but some 25 other defendants and saying in effect that not he but the others started the price war that had been hurting him.

(See NEWS BRIEFS, P 2)

A LOOK AT BISHOP'S TAE KWON DO



Black belt Instructor Ron Wilson
Pacifist defenses for the macho West. P 8

Inyo's new congressman

BILL THOMAS PLANS NO INYO OFFICE BUT SAYS HE HAS A "BETTER IDEA"

FOR NOW AT LEAST THINGS ARE "MOVING SLOWLY" for the 18th district's new congressman - as probably they are for all of the nation's 77 freshman congressmen. The man who for the next two years will serve the 18th's four-county constituency was in Washington last week (He commutes weekly to Bakersfield, his home), and from his office in the Cannon Office Building

Republican Congressman-elect Bill Thomas, a former state assemblyman, spoke long-distance to News-Letter Reporter Bennett Kessler:

Kessler: So how are things going?

Thomas: Things are very slow in getting rolling. Most of the older members of congress aren't here yet. But we were lucky; we got into an office. Some are operating out of the cafeteria.

Kessler: Is your family there, and how do they like it?

Thomas: I'll be commuting at least for now.

(See CONGRESSMAN, Continued on P. 12)



Congressman Thomas
A view on China from a house in Aurora Hills

B.K.'s Notes:

Help from the Big Apple P.13

FORUM:

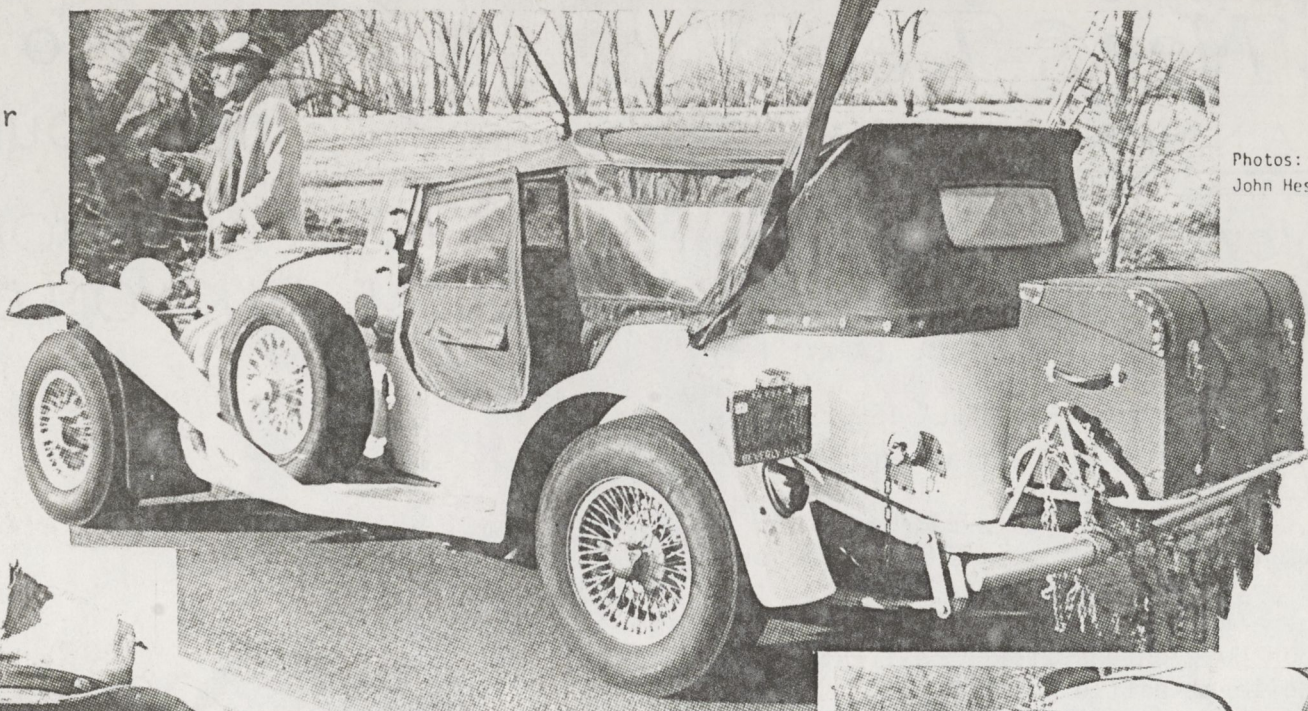
Lawyer looks at Lone Pine melee P.11

TRAVELING LADY

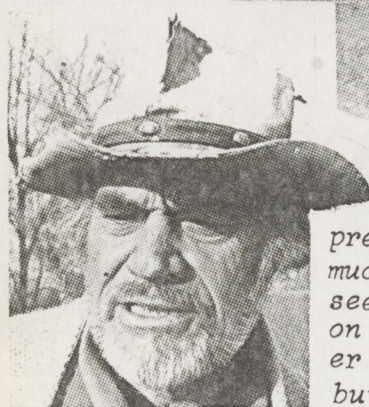
Casey and the photographer P.14

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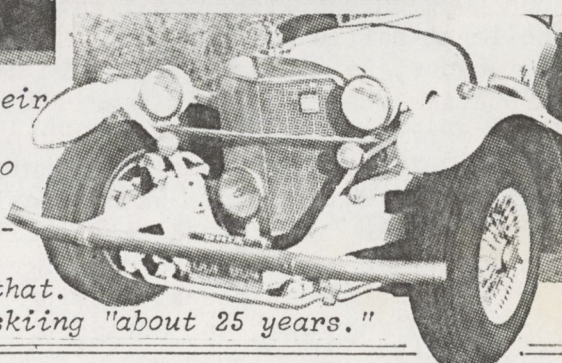
Photos:
John Heston



Car Buff Shaw

So long as Californians indulge their preoccupation with kooky cars, Inyo's much-travelled Highway 395 is bound to see its share of them - like this one on its way to the Mammoth slopes. Owner B.B. Shaw laid out \$12,000 for it, but says it's now worth three times that.

Shaw - "almost an actor" - has been skiing "about 25 years."



NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

In the countersuit, Massari said "I do not have the benefit of major oil company backing and cannot utilize gasoline credit cards in the sale of gasoline to the public and do not have the benefit of company sponsored advertising. The only way I can get a sufficient volume of business to survive is by maintaining a more favorable retail price, at some profit to my business, than outlets of the major oil company distributors."

He said that until around Dec. 18 his price for "regular" gasoline had been "relatively constant at his Main Street station. But, he said, "There are two gasoline stations located on West Line Street that have traditionally sold regular gasoline at prices lower than prevailing retail prices in the Bishop area...." He named the Eureka and Fargo stations among the other defendants. Then, he said, gas was going at around 71 cents. From that point, others joined in the price battle as bargain-hunting drivers flocked to one station or another on an almost day-by-day basis. Included in the war - and in the countersuit - were such popular outlets as Mobil, Exxon, Mohawk, and a number of others.

And where did it all start? The gas-guzzling driving public didn't know - or much care. There was speculation, privately, that once again one or more of the companies was out to put somebody out of business; but that was a matter for the courts to decide, and at mid-week, lawsuits or not, the pump prices remained low and the request to fill 'er up kept things busy for all the stations.

AL WINTER, HE OF THE MUTILATED TREE (See back page), was having other woes this week. Winter said that when he and Mrs. Winter were having breakfast one recent morn, they were jolted by a "terrific crash." It turned out

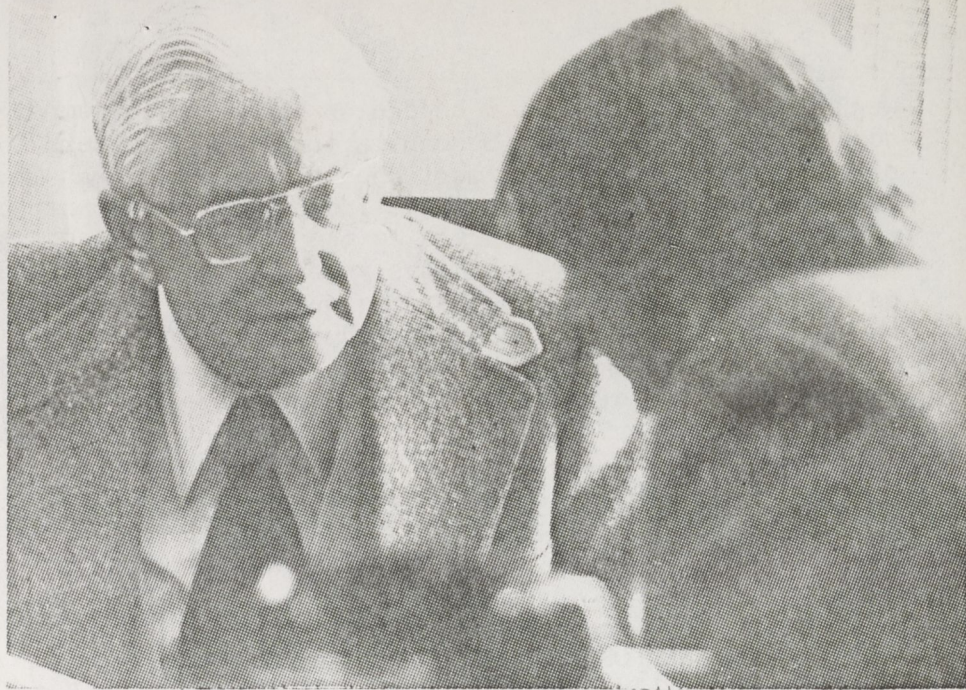
to be more tree trouble. From its parking place across the street at the Standard Station, a big semi had somehow lost its brakes and rolled across the highway into a lamp post which in turn crunched into the controversial tree. It appeared to have come out best in the collision.

LAST WEEK, THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR FIRED BACK at what he called a grinding of personal axes among personnel in the county's employ. He was countering the recent charges to the effect that Inyo County was suffering a severe case of "morale" problems among its employees. Administrator John K. Smith's special target was a recent questionnaire mailed out to members of the Inyo Employees Association. A mailback of questionnaire answers gave a strong indication that in fact all was not well among the county workers - a fact duly reported to the media by Employees' President-elect Darlene Landis. She had said that among the workers' top gripes were low wages and "some working conditions," that "workers were reluctant to approach the personnel department with problems because they think personnel would back the department head rather than the individual employee." But Smith thinks that charge is "ridiculous." He insists that "It sounds like someone's grinding an axe for their own personal needs. It's just too bad. This whole questionnaire is ridiculous."

Smith claims that "a select group" read the questionnaire" and that only "two or three" people are trying to perpetuate bad feeling. And we are trying to generate good feeling." As for his "unapproachable" status, Smith said he would be "dumfounded if employees think I'm unapproachable. I don't think these complaints come from a significant percentage of the employees. A morale problem doesn't exist, and they know damn well we can't do anything about wages." Official protestations and denials not-

Herb's final conference

After 12 years of service, Herbert London, the supervisor of Bishop's first district and the patriarchal figure of Inyo's board of supervisors, was out of office. And last week he attended his last meeting as a supervisor. The board voted its thanks. What was discussed in this final, intense conference with board Chairman Richard McDonald? They talked about Herb's livestock. Meanwhile (See below), his replacement and others were sworn into office.



NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

withstanding, it became increasingly clear, however, that not just everything was perfectly serene in the county's "personnel" and "hiring and firing" matters - as evidenced by two other occurrences that began making their way into last week's newscasts:

THE SUPERVISORS, SHOWING ONLY A LITTLE embarrassment, moved as quickly and quietly as possible to settle out of court a lawsuit filed last year by a young man who had been hired - and then inexplicably and abruptly fired - into the county's CETA program. The arbitrary and admittedly unjust firing will cost the taxpayers several thousand dollars (\$2000 cash to the plaintiff, Jack Pound) in cash and legal time and effort, and it stems

directly from what some employees and officials see as contradictory lines of power and authority in the county's personnel office. In any case, the Pound lawsuit which had been filed in federal court stood to bring out a number of inequities - even civil rights issues - that county officialdom has chosen to overlook or hide. The supervisors voted to settle the suit rather than go to trial and Pound, meanwhile, was keeping cool: "I may have something to say about the whole thing, but not until and unless I have the county's check in hand."

THE PERSONNEL OFFICE TROUBLES WERE FURTHER highlighted by the sudden resignation of the county's long-time CETA co-ordinator, Jennifer Duncan. Duncan gave the county a "six-

An oath makes it 'official'



Elected or re-elected to office in the November election, these county officials were sworn-in early this week by Judge Verne Summers. In salary and status they ranged from justice court judge (\$31,800 per year) to constable (\$150 and fees). Taxpayers will pay them all a total of over \$240,000 for the services they render this year. From left: Summers; Coroner Don Talmadge; Treasurer Fred Flowers; Judge Don Chapman; Auditor Connie Hildebrand; Schools Superintendent Janet Watkins; Assessor Jack Clay; Public Guardian Mary Ritter; Sheriff Floyd Barton; Clerk Rita Bromley; Supervisors Wilma Muth and H.B. "Lefty" Irwin; Constable Donald Lynch. Following the swearing-in, all signed bond documents and an oath of allegiance (right).



weeks' notice" in a letter handed to the personnel bosses last week. Duncan is the CETA official who hired Pound, mentioned above, although her resignation and the Pound suit were unrelated. She had served as the county CETA co-ordinator for about five years. Asked why she had suddenly decided to quit, she named at least two areas of "problems" in the CETA and personnel departments: "One problem is the situation of being given responsibility, but no authority. Another is the lack of definitely defined lines of authority. When I leave I will make a statement concerning problem areas and potential problem areas, and will try to suggest - if anyone wants it - some alternatives and options."

 ANOTHER RESIGNATION ELSEWHERE, that of Southern Inyo Hospital Administrator Merlyn Pinney, has left the resignee at loose ends. Pinney, recovering at home with a serious case of the flu, says he's not sure what he will do now. And why did he resign? Pinney says he was "discouraged," adding that he felt "it was best for all involved that I leave." During his tenure the hospital had been wracked by financial and morale difficulties many of which Pinney had inherited from previous administrations. Undercutting him - and the hospital operation - was a long-standing, out-of-sight-and-hearing loc-

al campaign that involved anonymous calls and letters to the media, and also anonymous gripes from hospital personnel. "It was a combination of things," said Pinney. "I got worn out and thought it better to bow out."

"Moneywise," said Pinney, "the hospital always had a problem." Asked if he or others felt he lacked administrative ability, Pinney was candid: "Some people thought I didn't. It was hard to cope with the resistance. I've spent twenty or thirty years in administrat-

(NEWS BRIEFS Continued, Page 10)

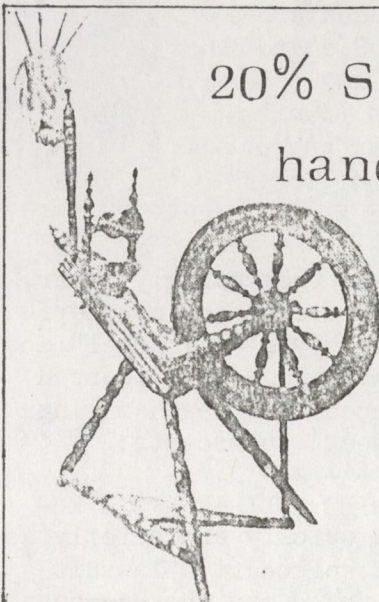
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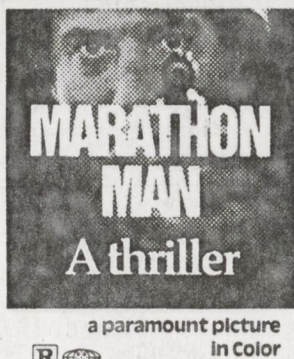
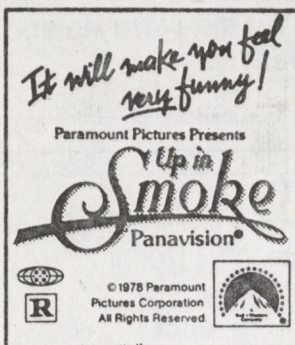
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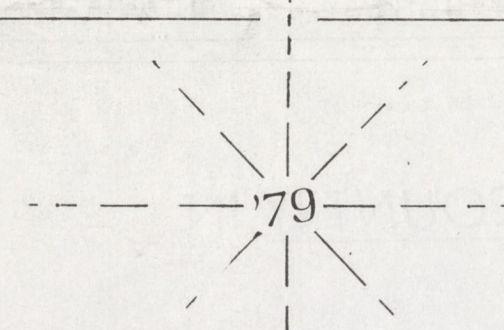


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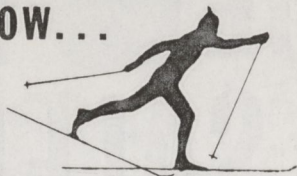
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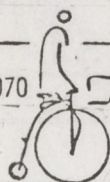


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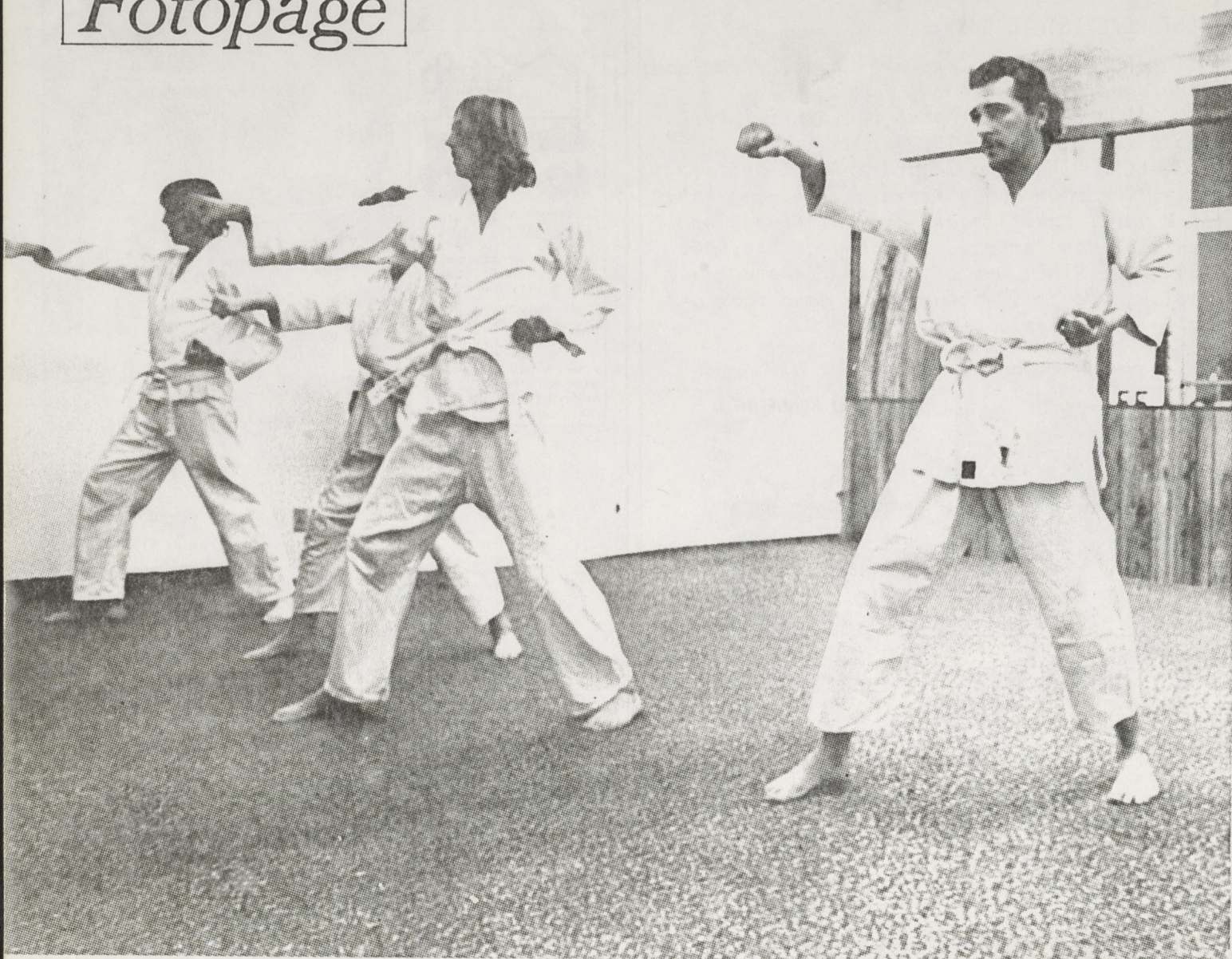
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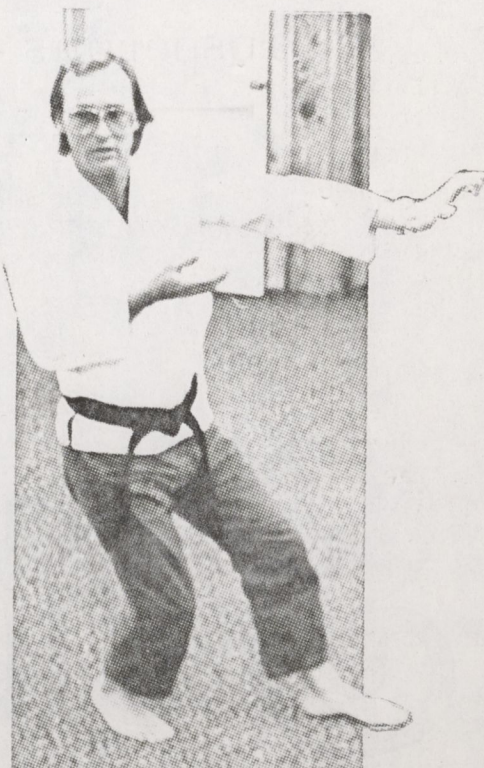


Chungdan Chirugi - "middle punch" - is practiced by a class that meets in a studio at 177 Short students. From left: Jay Snyder, Vince Sherart, Ralph Palsrock, Joe Salas, Jamie Matchett. He a

Tae kwon-Do

"TAE KWON DO," A KOREAN KARATE, EVOLVED FROM THE PEACEFUL PHILOSOPHIES OF ANCIENT TIBETAN AND HINDU MONASTERIES. ITS ADHERENTS ARE DISCIPLINED IN PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NON-AGGRESSION.

It is a purely defensive art that the pacifist monks used only sparingly. It arose out of their correct though reluctant resolve that not all people were as peacefully inclined as they who would harm no one. When attacked, defense was quick, effortless, could be fatal.



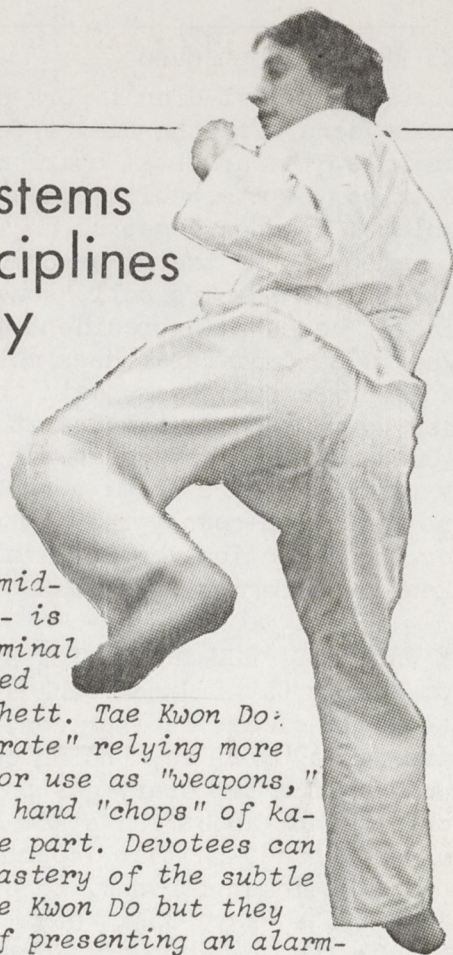
Chungdan Sudo Marki. Instructor gracefully executes a ballet-like "middle-guarding block."



Street in Bishop. Wilson has about 20 dmits all ages, male and female.

Its ancient systems and rigid disciplines pose a deadly threat to a would-be attacker

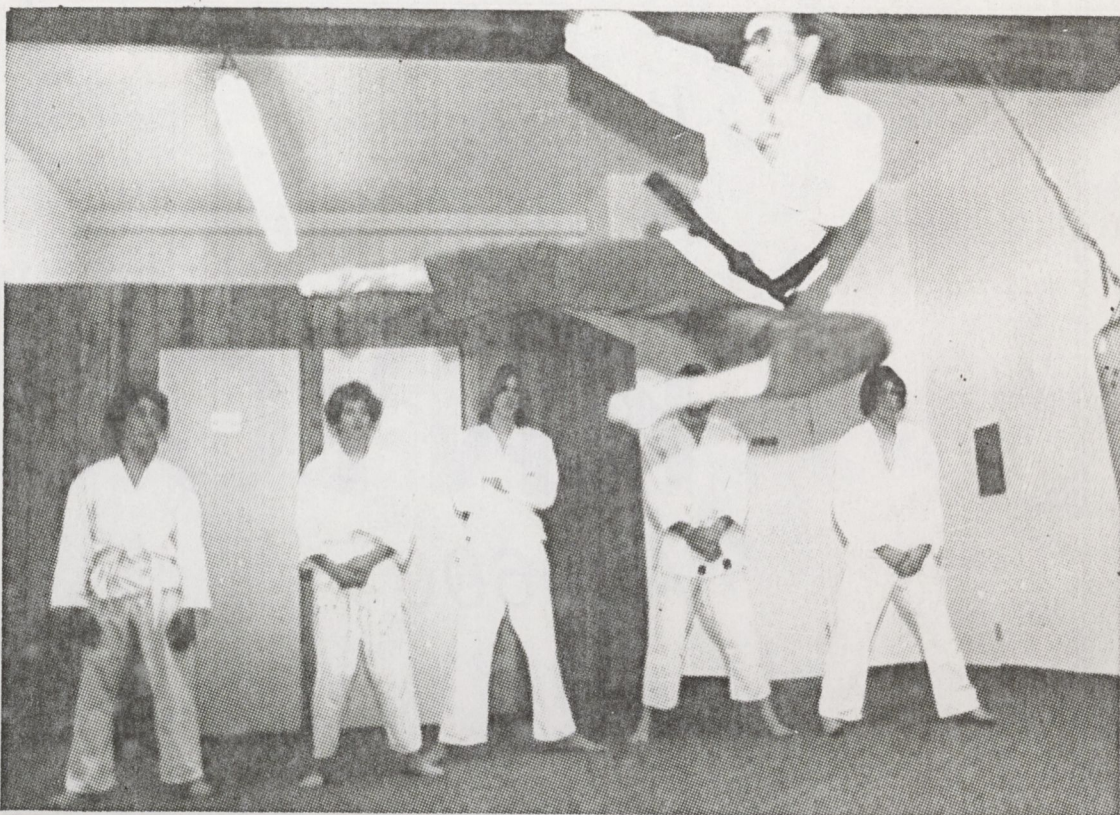
Chungdan ap chagi - "mid-front snap kick" - is an attack to the abdominal area, here demonstrated by Student Jamie Matchett. Tae Kwon Do is a variation of "Karate" relying more heavily on the feet for use as "weapons," although the standard hand "chops" of karate also play a large part. Devotees can spend many years in mastery of the subtle quick movements of Tae Kwon Do but they are usually capable of presenting an alarmingly effective defense in only a brief period of training.



Black-belt Instructor Ron Wilson, 30, learned Tae Kwon Do while in the Green Berets in the Viet Nam war. Attached as an advisor to a Korean "Tiger Forces" unit, he advanced to a "Brown belt" status and last August earned the "Black Belt." He came to Bishop in 1977.

A neck-crushing leap is exclusively 'Black belt'

The aggressive personality, the show-off and the neurotic are likely to run into trouble turning to the martial arts to give expression to their hostilities. Tae Kwon Do and other similar arts, when properly taught, anticipate negative interest and provide a subtle psychology cunningly calculated to defeat it; a "macho" personality is soon detected and authoritative instructors simply neglect to reveal important points of the art. The devotee then often loses interest and pursues learning paths more suitable to his own level of consciousness. The sincere student is conditioned to react to assault with precisely no more force than absolutely necessary. Even a form of meditation is encouraged.



Sangdan Tolyo Chagi - "flying side-kick" - is a swift, forceful attack calculated to crush an opponent's throat. It can be, and usually is, fatal, and is taught only to those of "Black belt" status. So sudden, so unexpectedly high was this leap that the photographer, though pre-warned, aimed too low, cutting out Wilson's arm.

NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

ive work. It just didn't work out here. I also came down with the flu. I felt very low." Meanwhile, the hospital board was hoping to put an end to its public communications problems. The board set up an information program by which the rumor-bombarded public can get what members call "some straight answers." The board's president-elect, W. Paul Payne, a controversial news columnist for the county's newspaper, said that he and another board member will "be at the hospital" on Sunday afternoons to answer questions. It may prove a good system: a number of Lone Pine and south-county residents, concerned over the direction the hospital has recently taken, were beginning to ask quite a few.

THE WARNINGS FROM THE NATION'S CAPITOL and from Energy Chief James Schlesinger are unmistakably clear: Fuel prices, including gasoline costs, will be winding ever upward, in spite of a temporary gas price war at Bishop. But how about the state of home-heating fuel - propane? In that department things appear, at least for now, to be in reassuring stability, so says Jack Ferrell, manager of the Lone Pine, Bishop and Mammoth outlets of Cal-gas, a local propane retailer. It was learned over the holidays that Cal-gas had recently bought out the Doxol dealership from the Williams Energy Company - in a deal with an unspecified purchase price. That merger gives Cal-gas a much larger slice of the Inyo propane market. Will that then affect the propane price? Not at all, says Ferrell. "The

price is the same as last year. We buy fuel in the summer and store it - we have large storage facilities - and it costs less in the summer." Ferrell says that his company sells about 2½ million gallons of propane each year in the Lone Pine, Bishop and Mammoth areas. Retail price now stands at about 50.4 cents per gallon. Asked if he foresees any increase in the price Inyo and Mono customers will be paying, Ferrell said that he anticipates no increase "in the near future."

After the Doxol-Cal-gas merger, a number of users complained that their tanks were running out of gas - this during the holiday cold-snap. Ferrell was asked if the merger and change in route-men had anything to do with the empty and unserviced tanks. "No," he replied, "The empty tanks were due to the cold weather and heaters going day and night. Customers who normally got their tanks filled every three weeks were going for only two weeks. Now that the holidays are over we'll be working on our routes." The same complaining customers - some of whom found their tanks dry late at night - had no serious complaints about the service. Once notified, Ferrell called out emergency trucks that in some cases had to drive several miles, but the tanks were usually refilled in under an hour. "Not bad," said one, "considering the guy had to come out on a night like this."

THE KILLER WEED IS MUCH WITH US, in spite of all agency efforts to kill it out. Inyo's agricultural commissioner, Ed Hale, is among those waging a war to get rid of an invasion (NEWS BRIEFS Continued, Page 15)



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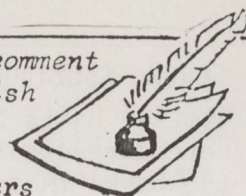
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LITTLE LAKE'S McCLENDON: BEING RIGHT ON TWO COUNTS

To the Editor,

With reference to my letter published on 12/22/78 regarding the school matter, in the third paragraph two words were deleted indicating I said something I did not say. I never call people names. I do not know the superintendent of schools. So I request here that you print that paragraph exactly as I wrote it:

"In my opinion, some changes are needed on both the faculty and the school board. The sup't of schools also, IF HE is a fence-sitter and fuzzy thinker."

Thank you.

- Pat McClendon
Little Lake

(Editor's note: Forum Contributor McClendon is correct on two counts: (1) News-Letter incorrectly published the line in her letter deleting the two words "if he", and (2) she is not a name caller. News-Letter regrets this clerical error which substantially altered McClendon's intent and meaning, and hopes that she will forgive the editor's temporary lapse into dyslexia.)

NO WEEKEND MECHANICS AND WHY; AND A MUTUAL APPRECIATION OF SERVICES

Dear B.K.,

Our answer to the question "Why the absence of mechanics on weekends" in your Dec. 22 issue, is because we work very hard five days a week trying to please our customers. A lot of customers don't want to have their vehicles tied up for necessary repairs for the proper length of time for us to do a good job. (We haven't found the magic wand to make the repairs while the car is being driven. Although many people think we should.) How can we expect to do a good job on skiers' foreign cars, whose only concern is to get to the slopes or hurry home? All parts, especially foreign, are hard to come by at the best. We not only have to fight the parts problem, but also the customers dilemma of being broken down in a strange area.

If they are in such a hurry let them wait until Monday to get their vehicles repaired. It's not worth the money we make, besides, "Uncle Sam" likes the extra skiers' bucks. Besides all this, are we supposed to stop everything we are doing and neglect our local people and make them wait just to get a skier on his way to the slopes? BELIEVE ME, A LOT OF THEM THINK SO. After all, Monday is another day.

- Mr. K Automotive Service
Bishop

PS: We really enjoy your News-Letter

(Editor's note: News-Letter is grateful in discovering yet another local service that puts the home folks before the skiers. "B.K." had written in her column something to the effect that some tourists were complaining about mechanic service in the area during

weekends.

And a PS to you too: News-Letter has availed itself of Mr. K's service, having gone there for a wheel alignment - which was completed within 30 minutes of the time the car was brought in and which cost less than a similar service "down south." On that basis, the editor can truthfully say he enjoys Mr. K's service, too.)

THE LONE PINE MELEE: DEFENDING THEM IN - AND OUT - OF COURT.

Dear Editor,

I have just read a letter to the editor from former Deputy Sheriff Thomas E. Gonzales, which was published in the Dec. 22, 1978, edition of the Inyo County News-Letter. Mr. Gonzales is quite upset and critical of our district attorney for failure to prosecute certain Lone Pine residents engaged in a melee involving Mr. Gonzales himself. Mr. Gonzales further suggests by way of innuendo that perhaps "deals" were made by the district attorney in order to avoid prosecution.

As a defense attorney retained to represent several of the parties arrested in connection with this matter, I can state unequivocally that no "deals" of any kind were made on behalf of my clients, nor were any "behind-closed-door" meetings held. Mr. Gonzales conveniently fails to mention that his own questionable conduct contributed significantly towards the ultimate disposition of the matter. After all, the incident was thoroughly investigated by an agent of the California Department of Justice, whose report was certainly unbiased.

Mr. Gonzales' letter to the editor is a self-serving attempt to pass the blame for an unfortunate episode caused primarily by Mr. Gonzales himself. It is a comfort to know that the integrity of local law enforcement will not be further tarnished by association with Mr. Gonzales.

- Edward Forstenzer
Attorney
Bishop

(Editor's note: In fairness to Mr. Gonzales it might also be pointed out that the unbiased investigation by the justice department - an exhaustive one, we are told - revealed no information that prompted charges against him in the Lone Pine case. The former deputy's current suspension was brought about by other problems which have yet to be decided in court.)

BIG PINE'S KNIGHT CALLS OFF THE JOUST AND PLANS TO "GO PRIVATE" AT THE MANOR

Board of Supervisors
(Copies to the media)

Recently I submitted a request to the Board of Supervisors that Knight Manor, on a
(See FORUM on Page 12)

FORUM, Continued

limited basis be left open to the public. I am hereby rescinding that request and advising the board that Knight Manor will be going private on or about April 1, 1979, as agreed. I have had no less than several hundred requests from the public that Knight Manor not go private, the only reason for my request to the board.

Now it is obvious to me that when Supervisor Muth hand-delivers the complaints of some seven families in protest to Knight Manor remaining open to the public, that my intentions have been interpreted other than what I had in mind.

The board of supervisors represents the public; I do not. The board has the means by which they can let the public determine their own fate, namely, County Code 18.81.320.

It has been suggested to me that I request the board to use the foregoing authority. This I find I cannot do. I will make absolutely no further effort in this matter regarding an application, EIR, fees, public hearings.

Knight Manor is a privilege, not a right.

- Dean W. Knight
Big Pine

(Editor's note: However the county officials may feel about Knight's "private" or "public" status, they apparently support the club as a favorite watering spot. Club Owner Knight said that "all" the members of the board of supervisors except one, Wilma Muth, and that "a lot" of the members of the county's planning organization with whom Knight has had more than a few problems, have more than once enjoyed the facilities of the club. "Do they drink at the bar?", Knight was asked. "Certainly," he replied. None however have applied for membership in the club when it becomes "private.")

FROM LONE PINE, A SHOT AT LOW-FLYING PLANES

Editor:

For about two years I've been complaining about low-flying planes in Lone Pine and Olancha.

My brother is a flyer and I have flown. Once when I was on Whitney Portal Road, a plane buzzed right by me. I wrote to the defense department about it, questioning the low-flying aircraft and the numerous sonic booms. I talked to the public relations people at China Lake; they had gotten other calls and they wanted a letter. I received a letter from the Department of the Air Force at Washington. They said our area underlies an "MOA" or Military Operations Area.

My question is how can the FAA say that we're part of a military area? Don't those of us who live "underlying" get to consult?

- Ms Jerry Sexsmith
Lone Pine

(Editor's note: The record of government from the courthouse to the White House indicates that, no, you don't have much say about much of anything anymore. (Ref. ELM, USFS, etc.) It would seem that "citizen input" gets a polite reply every now and then, but not much more. You might try a letter to the new congressman - or, better still, work through a highly vocal special interest group. Meanwhile, duck fast.)

CONGRESSMAN, Continued

My children are in school in Bakersfield. My wife and kids will be coming here during the summer vacation.

B.K.: How's the cost-of-living in Washington?

B.T.: High. What we call in California a studio apartment goes for \$450 or \$500 if it is in reasonable driving distance of the city.

B.K.: And how is the pay on the new job?

B.T.: As congressman, I'll make \$57,000; in the assembly I made \$25,500, but then I was provided a per diem allowance of \$43 to \$46, plus a state lease car. In the house there are no extra benefits. We pay our own insurance.

B.K.: Do you plan to have an office in Inyo County as did Congressman Ketchum?

B.T.: For now, no. But in terms of service, it will be the same as before or even better. We're planning on having a mobile office that will take care of Ridgecrest and on up Highway 395 to Lone Pine, Big Pine and Bishop. We'll have to work out the hours and the schedule. We will keep the offices in Lancaster and Bakersfield...The numbers there are Ketchum's old numbers for now.

B.K.: How about the national issues - like the China situation?

B.T.: There hasn't been much reaction, since most of the members aren't here yet. I think it was timed that way by the president. Something had to be done, but I'm concerned that not enough is known about the present regime (in China)....How do we know that in the next few years, the regime won't change, then where will we be? I'm concerned with severing ties with Nationalist China; it makes us look very bad. Taiwan should have had advance warning about this. I think it could have been handled more diplomatically.

Before and after the talk with Thomas, Kessler had spoken to members of the congressman's staff. From his administrative assistant, Cathy Swajian, she learned that the new representative "has a commitment" for an appointment to the house agriculture committee. Speculation on that appointment has it that such an appointment may be good news for the essentially conservative farm and agriculture interests east of the Sierra.

Swajian said that the congressman has been "reading stacks of mail and materials in preparation for the new session." She said the mail from constituents "has been coming in for two months."

As for getting things underway, Swajian said things are "chaotic" in the new office, with telephones installed "only last week."

"There are no typewriters yet, but there are eight people working on the organization." At least two members of the late Bill Ketchum's staff - Jim Wittinghill and Doris Swisher - will work for Thomas.

In recent weeks Thomas has spent considerable of his time being "oriented" at seminars in Washington and in Boston. For now, he is renting a house in the Arlington, Va., "Aurora Hills" section. He will be sworn into office on January 15.

Back home in the congressional offices at Lancaster and Bakersfield, "we're just now getting our supplies," said one assistant.

Bill Ketchum's may be a hard act to follow.

Notes From B.K.



BENNETT KESSLER

HOLIDAYS THANKFULLY OVER. Back to abnormalcy, running late as usual, and pondering seriously the question of whether a handful of people are actually capable of producing a 16-24-page newsletter with nearly a score of photographs plus lay-out and in-depth coverage on a given day of every single week. Hang in there fans, we're trying. And help's on the way: Leaving New York on the 12th is Jim Smith, a photojournalist pro who's been doing serious picture essays for *Penthouse*, *Scholastic*, and other national mags, not to mention covers for Lord-knows-how-many books. He's winding up an assignment right now that calls for a panoramic view of NY from atop the AT&T Building.

"GOOD MUSIC" BUFFS WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE NOTE: The new owners over at KNYO (the revamped and revitalized KINC, 600 AM) are programming each Sunday afternoon a concert series - and this with little or no commercial break. A few cards and letters might just do the trick to keep them going on this (for Inyo County) innovation.

THE WHOLE COUNTY CLOSED DOWN FOR CHRISTMAS - so where was the action? Art & Dolly's out on Bishop's far-north side....just for those who, after Christmas morn, felt they just couldn't handle cooking at home. Our thanks and was it great!

A LOT OF HOLIDAY DINERS-OUT: At the "Club": The Judge Don Chapmans with the (Councilman) Pete Pearsons; also Don and Pat Talmadge; and at another table, Inyo's county clerk Rita Bromley. And what a New Year's party: Judge Summers sporting a white blazer and putting aside his usual reserve to mix and mingle and greet a hundred friends. Attractive couple at the N'year's bash: Paul Payne and Ann Capodanno; also Al and Virginia Schoeman; Roy and Gwen Joseph and Mary and Bill Collins - and scores more. And for once the pianist, Al Winters, had a backup band and....and I could have danced all night.

FACE IT, WE'VE GOT TO GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE EVEN IF HE'S A BUREAUCRAT. Some weeks back we itemed that the Forest Service was ripping off Ted Hagle on the lease of 25 feet of space on a vacant hill where he picks up his cable TV signal. He'd been told to pay more than \$200 a year for the spot. Then Hagle was called in by a Forest Service man who was not acting at all like a bureaucrat and he dropped the tab to \$60 per. A pat on the khaki-green back.

THE OLD BEACON MAY COME TO LIFE AGAIN (AND MAYBE DRAW OFF SOME OF THE HAT AND BOOTS TYPES) if Owner Bob McGraw finds that DWP won't transfer the land-lease when the Beacon is sold. McGraw says if that happens he'll open the place up himself - dining and dancing. And what then if DWP won't renew McGraw's lease? He says he'll get a good lawyer.

VERY PLEASANT PEOPLE DEPARTMENT (Psychiatric Division): Kevin Ford, mental health counselor. He talked to us about what they've come to call the "Holiday Blues." Says he's been counselling a number of cases in recent weeks. Ford, not only smart but wise, says he suggests to them that they go do something for somebody else, get their minds off Self. Ford, who is from New York, is one of our senior citizen counsellors and social workers. He says the older folks displayed positive attitudes about the holidays.

BUSINESS IS A LITTLE SLOWER THIS YEAR and there are those who say thanks a little for that. Mammoth Mountain figured "optimistic estimates" of around 13,000 in the same (holiday) time period as last year (16,000). So many came last year, the place was sheer chaos.

SUGGESTION TO THE NEW CONGRESSMAN (or anybody else who will listen): Push - hard - to revoke the visas of those Iranian college brats who figured as how they can tear up Beverly Hills in what they euphemistically call a "protest." Irony of it all is that the Shah is the very one who made it possible for thousands of them to come to this country for school. I say ship 'em out.

ANOTHER DINER-OUT: Sheriff's Lieutenant Bob Vaulet making the rounds at the club and shaking hands with generous smiles for all. A politician in the making? He'd be a possible for the time when Floyd Barton retires....

HE SAYS IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF ALL THE NEW FAST-FOOD COMPETITORS (Burger King, etc.), but another VPP George Hitchborn, owner of Foster Freeze at Bishop, is planning a big expansion. Hitchborn verified rumors about his plans and said he will soak about \$475,000 into a "gourmet" section featuring deli foods, plus a bigger fast-food area. Nothing new really, he says: he's been thinking about it for three years.

SOME DWP EMPLOYEES ARE MIFFED - AND TALKING TO THE MEDIA about getting rooked out of a raise. DWP offers (and is trying hard to sell) the predictable excuse: Proposition 13. But DWP is a self-supporting department not dependent on tax money. Also: DWP is saving millions in tax payments because of Proposition 13, a savings that could be passed on to workers.

BUT MAY THE NEWS IN YOUR DAY BE GOOD NEWS EVERY DAY.....

- Sincerely,

B.K.

Traveling lady-

The News-Letter photographer was having coffee at Bishop's Hobo Joe's last week when a lady traveler caught his eye. What followed was this series of pictures of 15-month-old Casey Sides who with her parents, Robin and Cindy Sides, was returning home to Huntington Beach after a Tahoe vacation. Casey has also visited Hawaii and other points in her young life and she is clearly a seasoned traveler who would forgive the journalistic license taken in the fanciful captions.



"(Sigh) Another of those tourist places, but not bad."



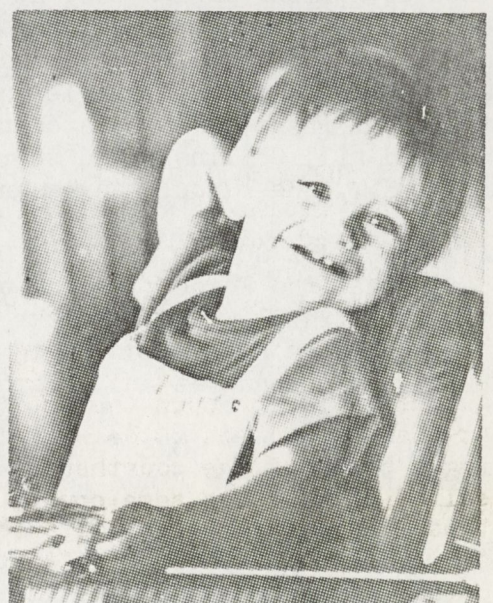
"Let's see now....What do I really want.....?"



"If they can fix it right, I'll have the lobster...."



"Oh dear. The photographers are here again....."



"....."



"They follow me everywhere, you know....."



"No lobster? Well, guess I'll have to make do...."



"C'est la vie....."

Photos: John Heston



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Inyo County **News-Letter**

SUBSCRIPTION

NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

of Halogeton, a poisonous weed that is often deadly to livestock and which also deposits on the soil a poison that kills many other plants. Halogeton has been seen both in Inyo and Mono Counties and Hale and his crews are taking up the torch - literally. But the efforts to burn out the weed may prove unsuccessful if left to only a small handful of agriculture men. In an effort to gain some reinforcements Hale is setting up a "weed identification" school for county agencies, set for February 27. He wants everyone to know about the weed before it gets a serious foothold in the two counties, and warns that parts of Nevada have been "devastated" by the ornery weed. Hale - and a number of others, including some noted botanists - warn that halogeton infestations are particularly likely in areas where "normal" ecosystems have been disturbed, or the ground dug up or where pastures have been over-grazed. Especially vulnerable is Inyo County where DWP groundwater pumping has reduced other plantlife. A few ounces of the stuff can kill livestock.

NO SIGNATURE, NO JOB. That's what political-dissenter Richard Kraft, 31, discovered when he was hired for a CETA job as a painter's helper in Inyo County. Kraft, a bearded occasional visitor to the county, had decided he'd like to settle here, and, hearing about the CETA job-opening, he applied and was quickly hired through the employment office at Bishop. On Dec. 26 he went to work, wielding a brush at the courthouse. Then he was called in to "sign some county forms." Among these was an oath of allegiance (required of all county employees). Kraft won't sign such oaths. When he refused, he was told, not without some sympathy, that he couldn't keep his job. And why wouldn't he sign? Kraft told a reporter that he "doesn't like some of the things the US is doing in Israel and in China," but what really irked him, he said, "is that the US wants to tell me what to do." He went to the district attorney to "get something in writing about why they fired me," but the district attorney refused. Kraft said he may appeal the issue since nothing in state or federal law requires such a signature in other than "sensitive" security positions. If he succeeds in the appeal it may mean still more trouble for the county's personnel and CETA offices.

H.B. "LEFTY" IRWIN, the walk-away winner of the District 1 supervisorial race of November, is now on Inyo's board of supervisors. He attended his first meeting as an elected official this week, replacing Herbert London, the long-time holder of the District 1 seat (See picture, Page 3). Irwin says he will "ease into the position," but he immediately expressed a concern about Proposition 13. A staunch conservative - thought to be far moreso than even London - Irwin says he thinks the meaning and the spirit of Proposition 13 have not been "properly addressed" by the board of supervisors. The board members elected a new board chairman to succeed Richard McDonald; he is Dick Engel of Bishop.

LAMENTING THE ECONOMIC LOSSES IN THE end of the county he has come to love and prosper in, Businessman-civic leader Bruce Ivey has

told the board of supervisors that the "northern end of the county is enjoying all the growth," and that his end - the southern portion - "has lost several businesses." Ivey said he was representing - and presumably speaking for - the Lone Pine Lions Club. That group, whose membership includes a not inconsiderable number of Southern Inyo's movers and shakers, thinks the county may be able to balance out the northern migration. Ivey pointed out, for instance, that the department of water and power had "willingly" offered land for some roadside rest stops at Independence and Lone Pine, rest stops that might act as a further tourist-lure to those areas. Ivey said that he and other businessmen will happily foot the bill for the rest stops and then give them over to the county as "self-supporting" facilities.

AND IF NORTHERN INYO IS GROWING ECONOMICALLY beyond the envious wishes of Southern Inyo, it may be moving ahead in television viewing. Mike Martell, operator of a Bishop cable system, told the supervisors he can bring Chicago and Atlanta television channels, not to mention a pay movie channel with no commercials, into Bishop's living rooms, if he can get the board's okay on a site at the airport where he would set up a satellite receiving station. The board may grant the request, and this week members turned the matter over to the airport committee and planning commission. Meanwhile, in southern Inyo, viewers are still limited to three or four LA channels.

HIS TERM ON INYO'S CONTROVERSIAL PLANNING COMMISSION expired this week, but Bob Gracey will continue on the job. His Independence hometown supervisor, Johnny Johnson, made it official by re-appointing him. Another of the county's planners, Bill Charlton, said he is not seeking re-appointment, leaving the spot open for Supervisor-elect "Lefty" Irwin to fill.

THE SHERIFF'S MEN CALLED IT CAR THEFT - and by so doing took a shot, critically, at the county probation department's "home" for troubled or delinquent girls at Independence. But Probation Officer John Lee viewed an early-week incident otherwise: "It was a spur-of-the-moment lark," he said. "It was an internal situation and nobody in the community was hurt. The girls took a car we use here at the place and went joy-riding to Lone Pine." And what will Lee do about the girls involved in the incident? "I just gave 'em hell," he said. "I told them they had let some people down. I'll do what I always do - take the next step. If they don't respond, we'll go further - into a more restrictive phase of their program." At week's end, some of the girls were feeling some of Lee's "more restrictive phase"; they were in temporary house detention. Said Lee: "I'm not giving up on any one of those girls. This is a long way from being a hard case." Some members of the sheriff's office had been an active part of a move last month that denied the girls' entrance into the local school. Was the "car theft" then a resentful protest against that action? "Oh, no. No," said Lee, "It was a lark. The situation was handled in no time at all, and I've got a good handle on the matter."

The county's unused park fund angers the builders

HOME BUYERS MUST ULTIMATELY FOOT THE HIGH COST OF THE COUNTY'S PARK FEE SYSTEM THAT COLLECTS THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FOR A TRUST FUND BUT BUILDS NO PARKS



Developer Roger Glidden

It all started with some West Bishop housewives

WITH A KIND OF WEARY PATIENCE Inyo County's administrator explains that it "all started with a group of West Bishop housewives" who were demanding neighborhood parks. Under the pressures exerted by "thirty or forty of them" the county's then-director of parks and recreation, Rick Carrunchio, came up with the idea of a builders' and developers' fee. Funds derived therefrom would go into a fund or a trust to be used later in developing a system of "greenspace" areas. "We knew it would take five or ten years to get enough money," says Administrator John K. Smith. "It came in slow at first."

But over the years the fund grew. The developers were asked to fork over increasing amounts of fees which sometimes can come to as much as \$12,000. The developers explain to buyers that it is them, the buyers, who pay the bill. For what? There are no parks adjoining the tracts in which they buy lots.

"At the outset," says Smith, "the housewives were racking Carrunchio. They said they would volunteer to maintain the parks. But when it came time to find a place to put the park areas, no one wanted the sites behind their own homes." Parks are great, it seems, so long as they're somewhere down the block and out of earshot of screaming kids.

Then came Proposition 13, the easy-out scapegoat of government officials everywhere, and the explanation that even if parks are built there is no money to maintain them because of the tax revenue cutbacks. And then a recent situation came up that once again brought the issue into the public's attention. Both the builders and even some county officials admitted that Roger Glidden had "done his homework."

Glidden, who is the engineer on a West Bishop subdivision developed by Ron Hubbard and John Runkle, says the developers were stuck with a whopping \$12,000 county bill for park fees. Glidden appeared before the board of supervisors (of which he himself might have been a member had not the fortunes of November's election gone against him), and he told the board that "Twelve thousand dollars for fourteen lots is not reasonable. We expected to pay half that amount."

Few would disagree with Glidden's position under the present circumstances. It re-

quires little mathematical expertise to see that potential lot-buyers would be paying several hundred dollars more per lot for a "park" they clearly are not getting.

And county officials, including Smith, candidly admit that at present they have no intention whatever of building any "parks." The fund currently holds about \$45,000 - peanuts by today's standards of recreational construction - and it is neither enough to buy park-sites nor maintain existing facilities. It is certainly insufficient to buy greenspace areas for all of the subdivisions that have been required to pay into it.

Is the county then ripping off the developers - and the lot-buyers? Yes and no.

Yes because a number of homeowners have been promised by the developers that the county will build parks. Like the people out at Sierra Grande estates, for example. Ron Hubbard and a partner in that development, Stan Henderson, said that the former parks director, Carrunchio, told them they would definitely get a park for that sub-division, and in return for the \$7000-or-so they had paid to the county in fees. There is no park, no apparent intention for a park, and the folks at Sierra Grande are taking a hard look not at greenspace but greenstuff, the money they paid out for a park.

And no because, as John K. Smith says, the county may yet continue with its park idea envisioning as the housewives did "neighborhood" acreages that hopefully will raise less noise from kids than those acreages now raise dust and fire hazards. Or, with the funds now available and those collected in the future, "we could upgrade the existing parks," or various areas could form recreation districts in order to maintain the parks."

The reluctant heir-apparent to the park fee headache is the county's current parks and recreation director, Jim Angelo. Under growing pressure from the developers (and a few irate lot-buyers), Angelo has prepared a revised ordinance that would not only reduce the fees,

but would also refund some of the money that developers (and lot-buyers who paid the developers) have paid into the fund. Presumably, the "trust" fund has been earning interest over the years, although it is not known if the county bureaucracy would go so far as to repay some of that money too.

Angelo says there are other options for spending the money - like upgrading facilities that already exist such as Bishop's Millpond park and Diaz Lake near Lone Pine. But he, too, sees a direct relationship between Proposition 13's limitations on money and the apparent failure of the park fund idea. "The county's ability to provide these parks is practically nil. The board made a decision to cut expansion of its facilities. I think it was a wise move."

But developer Ron Hubbard disagrees. "I told a lot of people at Sierra Grande that they would be getting a park. Part of the property price includes the park fee. I've repeatedly asked the county about it, but I've never gotten an answer. My question has always been, 'Where is the money being used?'" And in fact, until last week when John K. Smith was asked by a reporter to produce the figures on the park fund, a number of builders had suspected that there was much more in the fund (Some had given exaggerated figures on how much they'd paid in), and that perhaps the county was filtering park fees into other accounts as a Proposition 13 dodge that would raise money. Apparently those suspicions were unfounded. The money is just there, has been there, and now seems to be going nowhere.

And if the money should be there at all, then "it should be realistic," says Glidden. He suggests far smaller fees and also fee formulae that are more equitable. The county's current complex system of arriving at fees does indeed appear to be unfair to certain types of "sub-divisions." Glidden, who had gone far into the fee record, produced the facts on one case in which a land owner (a prominent West Bishop businessman) had asked that a piece of land be divided. "It cost him about \$800 just to draw a line down the middle of his property," said Glidden.

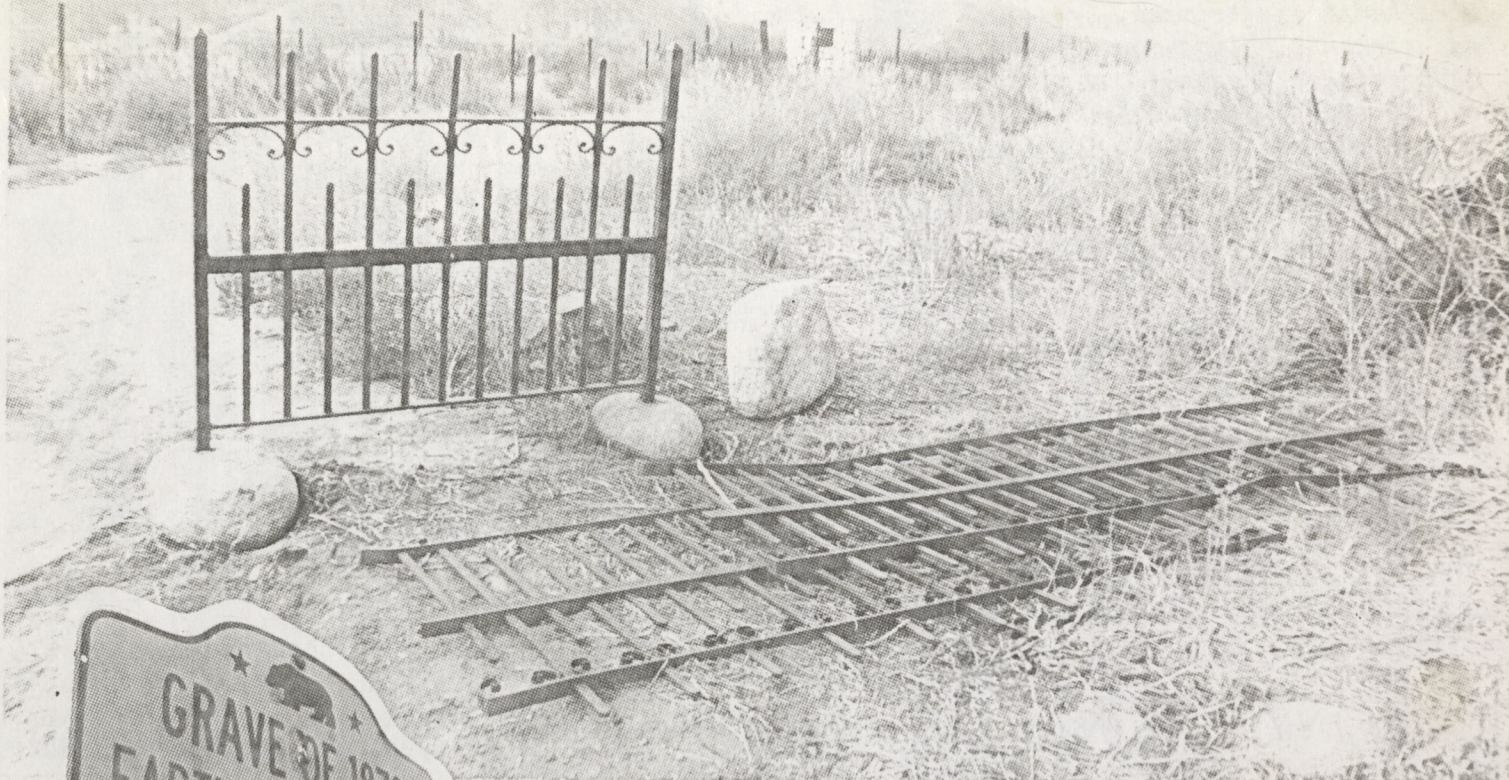
The board, faced with the realities of collecting funds they have no right to use for other purposes - and with the "housewives" who want parks but want them someplace else, is seriously considering Angelo's ordinance. They may lower fees to a figure that would demand no more than a top \$150 per lot. To the buyer of course that's a lot of money added to his purchase price if he's going to receive nothing for it.

So why collect any park fees at all, however small the top figure, if there are no plans whatever to build parks? To that question, obviously, there is no reasonable answer, not from within the complex of bureaucratic regulation we live with (park-less) nowadays. But John K. Smith tried:

"That's a good question," he said, "if we continue with the idea of neighborhood parks.....if we could upgrade existing parks....."

This week, John K. was suggesting to the board members that they "eliminate" the fees.

A grave situation



To anyone (usually a tourist) who bothered to care or to look, the situation at the state's "Historical Landmark No. 507" was eminently clear: The grave of the 1872 earthquake victims near Highway 395 north of Lone Pine had fallen on hard times - and into hard hands. Vandals had torn out fancy iron fencing, carting some of it away, ripped out wooden fenceposts near the grave monument (in background in picture above), and generally disrupted the final resting place of 27 victims of one of nature's more deadly upheavals. One tourist stopped into the office of Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce Manager Pat Farlander and gave her \$25 "for upkeep." The offer was refused but the county's inter-agency committee will take up the matter this week.

Bullet holes mar highway sign



Vignette: SUNDAY TREE TRIMMERS BRING DOWN LIMBS—AND AN ANGRY LAWSUIT

Al Winter, a Big Pine resident, grabbed his camera to take the pictures at left when on a Sunday DWP workers turned up to "trim the tree away from the wires."



It was the Labor Day weekend; clearly, it was a "day off" for most workers, including those of the Department of Water and Power. But at Big Pine a DWP truck drove up to the residence of Al Winter. The men went to work explaining that a tree growing into a power line had to be trimmed. Winter figured that was alright, holiday or not, but he became alarmed when the tree was practically denuded. As the men worked, Winter took pictures. When he asked "at least for the firewood," he says he was told that was against regulations, that the wood had to be "hauled away." Meanwhile, another tree - located on DWP property next door - presented a worse power line hazard - and last week still did. Winter went to court over the mutilation of his tree, his suit demanding \$21,500 in actual and punitive damages. Says Winter's attorney, Leland Bray: "This complaint is based on DWP's typical arrogance and disregard for property and the quiet enjoyment of the residents." Winter says he thinks the men were after wood for their own use, "moonlighting" with DWP's approval.



Plaintiff Winter and mutilated tree

eastern sierra news service

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INDEPENDENCE, CALIFORNIA

JOHN HESTON • BENETT KESSLER

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